



Safety First

SDREA Loss Control

Call Before You Dig

Spring is a time for many people to begin yard cleanup, renovations and maintenance. Once the ground starts to thaw, people want to start sprucing up their lawns, making it the envy of everyone in the neighborhood.

Some of these improvements may involve digging, like planting trees, shrubs, flowerbeds or vegetable gardens. You may also be looking into installing a fence or starting some other construction on your property that requires digging into your yard.

Whatever it may be, many home improvement projects begin with putting your shovel into the ground to move dirt. Some precautions need to be taken beforehand, though.

It is important to call local utility companies to make sure that if you dig in your yard, you will not hit any lines. Utility lines are perfectly safe if they are left alone and remain where they should be. Many things, like power lines, are put into the ground so they will not come in contact with humans, but if they do, they can cause serious harm and even death.

Some items that you need to watch out for when you are digging may be electrical, telephone or cable lines and natural gas, sewer or water pipes. To make sure that you are not digging where you shouldn't be, call local utilities so you know where any lines run under your property.

In South Dakota, you are required by law to call at least two working days before you dig. The phone number for South Dakota One Call is 1-800-781-7474. When you call, make sure you have necessary information ready, like your address and phone number, the companies or municipalities you are served by, and what kind of work you will be doing.

The One Call system is not responsible for marking the lines on your property, but they do contact those who are. This system makes the entire process much easier because you only have to contact one number instead of four or five.

Within that time frame, someone will come and mark your lawn with stakes, flags or paint. When you begin your work, make sure you stay at least two feet from the marked lines because anyone who makes the markings is required to be within 18 inches of the lines.